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ORGANIZED PREACHING. IV

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With this study we close the survey of the principles of Organized Preaching. We have reviewed briefly the various occasions when a sermon is called for on the theme of the day and have suggested certain subjects to meet these occasions. We have organized a group of thirty-two sermons around the life and message of Jesus. In this study we group a similar number of suggestions around the great subject, the Christian Gospel. These are only two of the great axes of interest which might be used to organize the year's work in the pulpit. Among the others are: The Christian Year; The Church Year; The Ideal and Work of the Church; Expositions of Vital Sections of Scripture; Great Christian Truths; The Kingdom of God; The Family of God; Bible Characters; The Christian Life; Social Applications of Christianity. Each of these, and other subjects which every preacher will readily determine, permit the orderly presentation of their contents during the year from the pulpit. The general principles that have been set forth in these studies will, it is hoped, illustrate how the work can be done from year to year, to the immense increase of the preacher's power.

Preaching Organized to Present the Christian Gospel

That this is the supreme business of the Christian pulpit requires no detailed discussion or defense. It has been thus from the very beginning of Christian

activity. The disciples rallied their faith in their living Master and then went out to tell all the world that they knew him as the Savior and Lord. This testimony was simple, direct, and positive at the beginning, and, in spite of the way in which the content of the message had enlarged as time has gone on, it still remains the great and permanent business of the preacher. The increased meaning of the message and its application to the whole life of mankind has made the work of preaching the gospel more complex and exacting; but it never has changed its warrants or released the preacher from his obligation to be a herald and a witness of the message of good news which Jesus brought to the world and for which he lived and died.

There are certain fundamental convictions that are imperative before a preacher will undertake this program. He must renew his ardent conviction of the truth of his message and the worth of his task as its herald. Christian preachers need to study their charter often in order that they may not lose their accurate sense of the work that it is their first duty to carry on in the community.

The tendency of parish work is to crowd to the wall the primacy of preaching and especially the supremacy of that kind of preaching which is concerned with the giving of the message to the community. There are so many errands to be run; so many entries to be made

on cards; so many interests to be served! But there is only one dominant purpose in the minister's pulpit work; it is to give in every possible phase and accent the old message that Jesus first announced in Palestine and which the apostolic succession of Christian preachers has perpetuated ever since. In the midst of the bewildering demands of the modern parish the preacher needs to reaffirm this principle daily as he prepares for his preaching.

The idea prevails widely that the work of the resident minister in his pulpit is to lay emphasis on the teaching aspect of preaching and delegate the more purely evangelistic task to men who specialize in this form of the sermon and who travel among the churches holding evangelistic meetings or conducting campaigns. There is a permanent place for the technical evangelist; there are times and communities that demand the organized movement carried on by the evangelist and his staff of workers. But there is a far larger place for distinctly evangelistic preaching and action in the program of every congregation. It is what is sometimes called *Evangelism Church-wide and All the Year Through*. It means that the preaching is organized around the purpose to present the gospel to the community as a message of life; that the people are united and directed in the support of the program so that they will make personal and persistent efforts to introduce men and women to Christ. It involves a movement of the whole church steadily and steadfastly toward the impression of the gospel upon the total life of the community. It defines the chief business of the church in this endeavor and calls for all the

possible resources of the people, drives us to new consecration and prayer, and fuses the energies of the faithful friends of Christ into one supreme loyalty and service. The organization of the church for this purpose is the highest privilege of the pastor.

As a part of this program the preaching of the year will be planned to present the gospel with new force and conviction. Therefore it is necessary to define again in one's mind and restore in one's experience the pristine meaning of the message which Jesus brought to the world and which was experienced by his earliest followers. A re-reading of the New Testament with this purpose in mind will be the best single way to gather the material for the sermons and to determine what subjects should be preached upon. *What is the gospel?* The word has been used so long that its first clear-cut meaning has been worn away like the face of a coin that has suffered hard usage. We must review and renew our consciousness of this noble word. It was good news in the first century; it is still good news where men strive with the underlying sins of the spirit; our work is to make it good news to ourselves and to others in spite of the commonplace character that time and custom have given to it.

Then, having selected the requisite thirty-two subjects which seem to be concerned with the publication of a real message to the modern community, a message which has "found" you and in which you believe with all your powers, the work of sermon preparation will begin. Of all the preaching to which the minister has devoted himself he will find that this is the most stimulating, delight-

ful, and rewarding. The happiest business in life is to set forth with all the powers at one's command the gospel of the reconciliation in Christ.

In attempting to give the message which we call the gospel, with what shall we begin? Perhaps the most familiar point of departure is the doctrine of God. Certainly this is the underlying truth that warrants the message and it must never be allowed to become obscured. Occasionally a preacher starts with the nature of man, his yearning for God, his essential religious character. This is vital. We must be sure that religion is an integral part of man's normal life. If it is something artificial or accidental, then there is no reason to expect that there will be a permanent response to the message. Preachers sometimes begin with the fact of Christ. He was the Messenger; in certain respects it is true that he *is* the Message. If we gain at the outset a clear idea of Jesus, if we are warmed by the appeal that comes from his radiant Person, we shall be disposed to accept the gospel and to trust in it as the way into a new life for ourselves and for the world.

The place that Jesus has occupied in the Christian experience of the world makes it seem reasonable to begin with a brief setting forth of Christ as the object of faith and love, with the expectation that through him we shall come to know God, to understand the meaning of sin and repentance, shall appreciate the new life that begins when we unite ourselves in obedience to Christ, and shall bring out the practical results in conduct that are the issue of this allegiance to Christ as Master and Savior. Therefore we begin this series of sermons

which is to present the gospel to the community as a claim upon their surrendered wills with a presentation of Christ as the object of love and trust.

In preparing these sermons the New Testament is the primary source of material. To read and re-read its records of the life and message of Jesus is the first privilege of the preacher. In addition two books will be found of great value. The first is *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, by William Sanday (2d ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1912). Among the numerous books on the life of Christ this is on the whole the most satisfactory as a working manual for the preacher. The second is *The Fact of Christ*, by P. Carnegie Simpson (Revell, about 1900). This is a study of the character and work of Jesus in a constructive way and is especially valuable because it sets forth the meaning of the Christian life in terms of a personal relation to Christ which is peculiarly adapted to preaching. There are many other studies of the character of Christ that will be of value; but we mention only these two because we do not wish to load our pages with references to books. And the most valuable material which the preacher will use in his sermons on Christ is that which will come hot from his own affectionate reflection on the record of the matchless life of the Master and the "wonder of his gracious words."

The purpose of these first sermons is to present Jesus in such an attractive way that those who hear will be disposed to receive his message favorably because they admire and love him as the Messenger. Therefore we shall seek to bring out the lovely character of the Jesus of the New Testament, who is the basis

of the Christ of the doctrines. We shall avoid at the outset any divisive doctrine in order that we may come with open minds, as the first disciples did, to the virile, noble, winsome Man of Nazareth.

1. The Man of Nazareth

Behold, the man (John 19:5)!

An exclamation of contempt becomes the highest tribute that could be given to a human being. Jesus is the one supreme Man. The way to know Christ is to know God. His life and experience furnish the base line from which we run our survey of life and chart the moral and spiritual universe.

His complete and glorious humanity commands our admiration and discipleship. We are sure when we are in his presence that we are in contact with everything that is noblest and best in our humanity. What we would like to become in our highest moments Jesus was constantly.

His courage commands our trust and confidence. Courage is admirable in all men under all circumstances. The brave man is the defender of truth, the champion of justice, the guardian of the weak. Jesus never showed the white feather.

His loyalty commands our allegiance. It crowned his courage. He never once failed his God, his comrades, or his Cause. It cost him labor and watching, pain and death. He kept faith with his ideals; he stood steadfast with the unpopular truth.

His unselfishness commands our service. Jesus was endowed with wonderful personal gifts. Men and women loved to be in his company because he was so friendly and so kind. He was utterly unselfish. He never put his own interests first.

His joy kindles our yearnings and invites our decision in his favor. Jesus was a happy man. The so-called "Beatitudes" are the assurances of happiness; and Jesus realized all of them in his own life from day

to day. Men never would have inferred from the life of Jesus that the world was a gloomy place or this life a "vale of tears." Men asked Jesus to be their guest because they liked to have him around.

On each of these counts the life of Jesus commends his message to us. What he was creates a presupposition that what he said is true and that it is desirable. Therefore Jesus himself is the best final warrant for accepting the gospel which he brought to the world.

2. The Great Teacher

And every day he was teaching in the temple. . . . And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him (Luke 21:37, 38).

We all must learn to live. Somewhere there must be found a teacher who can give us the truth. Jesus can meet this need.

The Teacher.—Jesus was a simple, natural, sympathetic Teacher. The scribes were dull, technical, out of touch with life. They argued at weary length about laws, ceremonies, and abstruse speculations. Jesus understood men, set forth the truth vividly, transfused it with warm human affection.

The truth.—As Jesus taught it truth bore directly upon life. The Sermon on the Mount is not a formal discourse on a religious subject; it is a workable program for individual and social living. Every principle that Jesus taught connects directly with the common work of the average man.

The method.—Jesus used homely figures and simple stories to express truth. He did not give detailed definitions or carry on elaborate discussions. For example, the stories of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan make the truth plain, vivid, and commanding. They are descriptions rather than definitions or debates.

The learners.—They were of all kinds. Little children heard him gladly; old men listened eagerly. Tired toilers stopped to take in his words; rich men asked him to dinner. He had a message for everyone.

The results.—Those who became Christ's disciples found that their lives were changed. The truth began at once to do something with them. They did not receive merely a new set of ideas from Jesus; they found a new way of life in listening to his words. The whole content of their relation to God and to one another was changed by what they learned from Jesus. The old scenes and duties remained; but the disciples of Jesus became new actors in the midst of old engagements. The result of learning in the school of Christ was a new practical life.

3. Jesus the Moral Radical

For from within, out of the heart of man, evil thoughts proceed (Mark 7:21).

Jesus went to the root of the moral and spiritual life in his teaching. His claim was asserted upon the ruling motives which actuate us in daily life.

Jesus affirmed the primary importance of purpose.—The old law dealt with actions; Jesus, with the ideas and purposes that inspire them. Jesus dealt with causes; the law, with effects. Jesus demanded a transformed life; the Pharisees, a conformed life. The conduct and character demanded by the law were mechanical and superficial; Jesus called for radical changes of purpose and a vital religion.

Jesus proposed a supreme standard.—Men were to be good as God is good and because God is good; loving as God loves. The standards of the Old Testament seemed high and difficult to reach; the standard proposed by Jesus was higher and more difficult. This makes it challenging and attractive; we are won by the fact of its difficulty to attempt to reach it. No other program of living compares with that which Jesus sets before his disciples.

Jesus provides resources to help us attain his standard.—This makes Jesus and his message different from any other teacher or truth. Other ethical and religious masters and systems propose ideals and standards; but they leave their disciples without help in

attaining them. The Christian gospel brings with it a new, resident energy which reinforces our highest human powers in our struggle to reach the standard set by Jesus. God takes a part in the problem. Help comes to us from the unseen. God breaks through. We are furnished with fresh troops. We may not be able to explain it; but we can feel and know it. It is a fact in our consciousness. There are millions of witnesses to it. God does not mock us with the definition of a purpose that we may never attain. With his help we are bound to win our battle.

4. Christ Claims Us for the Highest Life

Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter) (John 1:42).

There is something better in us than we have yet realized.—We are two persons: the one that is and the one that we may become. This "potential better" and "possible best" is our true self. The task of life is to bring this out into complete expression.

Christ claims the best in us.—Peter was only a fisherman to the people who knew him; he was a great, durable *foundation-man* to Jesus. Thus Jesus always sees the best in everyone. He claims us for our highest life. We may decline to yield to this claim; but we dare not ignore it. Certain comrades bring out the worst in us; Christ always evokes the best in us.

Christ joins forces with us to enable us to realize our highest life.—It is possible to catch so lofty a vision of life that we are disheartened by it. The challenge is so great that we lose hope of attainment. But Jesus does not leave us there. He is with us and on our side from the beginning.

The new character.—When Simon had become Peter he had not simply added more of the qualities of old Simon to his character. He had added Christ. The equation of his life was Simon+Christ=Peter. The same change may take place in us. The old self+Christ=the new self. That which has been

added in the process of development has been the very Person of Christ, actually entering into our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and helping us to realize our highest life.

Our response to the claim.—It is therefore supremely important that we recognize Christ's claim upon us, yield to the mastery of his motives and spirit, and work in friendly partnership with him to accomplish his purpose for us.

5. The Master's Motive Our Master Motive

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5).

How shall we respond to the claim that Jesus the man, the Teacher, and the Moral Master makes upon us? By acting constantly from the motives which controlled him habitually.

The importance of motives.—William James said that the group of ideas to which a man devotes himself and from which he works habitually, not spasmodically, is the most important fact about him. It is the habitual center of his personal energy. George Bernard Shaw said that what a man believes may be ascertained, not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts. Therefore the way into moral and spiritual union with Christ is to make our own the "group of ideas" from which he acted habitually.

The Master's motives.—At least three are clear: Jesus was constantly sure of the love, nearness, and care of the Father God. No failure could shake him from this working principle. He was true to it "as the needle to the pole." It was more real to him than the dusty roads or the boats on the lake. Again, Jesus never failed to have faith in his fellows and to believe in the worth of life. He was no cynic, no pessimist. There was no selfish motive or mood in him. He gave himself in boundless love and service to others and he helped them so much because he believed in them so greatly. Again, he had perfect confidence in the final

full triumph of his Cause. He was sure that man could finally be brought back to the Father from whom his sin was separating him. He was sure that the Kingdom of God, which he proclaimed and to which he gave his life, not only was worth while but that it would surely conquer the world in the end. He gave up his life when he was a young man; but these great working convictions he never abandoned.

Accepting Christ's motives.—Can we act habitually from such high motives as these? Yes. They are as valid now as they were when Jesus lived in Galilee. They are the very foundations of the moral and spiritual universe. If they seem reasonable, if our affections are warmed toward them, we need only to choose them resolutely and firmly act according to them and we shall experience the new life in Christ. This is the great choice by which we become Christians.

6. Christ the Object of Love and Faith

Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (I Pet. 1:8, 9).

The unseen but living Christ, whom the disciples knew and trusted, is still the object of love and faith and the source of our salvation.

The unseen Christ is the object of love.—Everyone who responds to the appeal of nobleness and beauty of soul loved Jesus of Nazareth. He was all that is admirable in his relations with others. What he was when he was living on earth he must be still in his eternal life. Therefore he is still the highest object of our affection, even if we do not see him or talk with him.

The unseen Christ is the object of faith.—Men gave their utmost loyalty to Jesus of Nazareth; they "left all" to follow him. They did not defend a theory about him; they yielded their lives to him. The unseen,

living Christ is worthy of a similar surrender of life to him. We accept what he tells us to be true and we give ourselves up to loyal allegiance to him.

The unseen Christ is the source of joy.—The disciples of Jesus of Nazareth were happy. Others saw this and were attracted to them by this fact. Humanity yearns for happiness. It is eager for joy. The unseen, living Christ still has power to come into our hearts, homes, and all our social relations and give us the deepest joy and satisfaction. The consciousness that we are united with Christ in the supreme motives of life gives us a kind of happiness that no other source can possibly provide.

The unseen Christ is the ground of salvation.—When Jesus of Nazareth lived in Palestine he brought a new vision and standard of conduct to those who loved and trusted him. It was a new life, as if he had created them again. He helped men realize God's purpose for them. Thus he saved them from their sins and into wholly new realms of thought and action. The unseen Christ still does this for us when we love and trust him. A higher set of ruling motives is permanently established at the center of our habitual action. Thus Christ becomes Savior and Master.

7. The Living Christ Our Constant Comrade

It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2:20).

The Christian life is a ceaseless friendship, an actual comradeship, between the soul and the unseen, personal Christ.

Physical presence is not essential to the highest friendship.—It is highly desirable. It is the condition of the vast majority of our human friendships. But it is not absolutely essential. The highest relations of life are maintained on the plane of spiritual sympathy, union in noble purpose, and the fusion of ideals in the supreme quest of life.

Jesus promised continued comradeship with his disciples.—His death separated him from his friends; but he prepared them for

this separation by the definite promise to be with them in spiritual union. "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." This was more than vague spiritual influence; it was such a personal comradeship that those who experienced it could be sure of it.

Millions of men have attested the experience.—The records of the race show that Jesus' promise has been realized in millions of cases. It is just and logical that we should believe that the ground of this experience is what the Christians have said it was, the positive union of the personal Christ with themselves as living beings. They have not been able to explain it; but they have affirmed it and have confirmed their testimony by their life and, often, by their death.

This fact satisfies our deepest yearnings.—We know that we hunger and thirst for the satisfaction of spiritual desires. We cannot live by bread alone. And Christ comes into the eager heart with a peace and joy that cannot be described or defined. He meets the deepest desires of the spirit for certainty and power. We know what help sometimes comes to us from the great inspiration of a human friend. All this derives from Christ when we meet him in the intimate union of the spirit.

8. Religion Inevitable

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek (Ps. 27:8).

Religion is the soul's instinctive and inevitable response to God. It is a part of every normal life. It exists whenever God is made a conscious factor in one's environment. It is a communion with the Divine.

How has God spoken?—In nature, in which he clothes himself with a living garment and through which shines his beauty and power. In human experience, as it is reported and recorded in history and literature. The past is not the record of chance

events but the register of God's purpose for our highest good. In our inmost souls, where in our highest and best moments we are conscious of the reality and movement of something higher than ourselves. Finally, God has spoken to us in Christ, the Word of the Father. In that perfect life and matchless character we hear most clearly God's voice speaking to our yearning and answering spirits.

How shall we answer God's voice?—First, by seeking in every possible way to hear it more clearly. We must keep in touch and tune with the holiest and noblest facts and forces in the universe and open our hearts to the great avenues of revelation noted above. The highest answer to God's voice is the happy and constant obedience that we render to every truth we know or discover. When we make the revelation of the Father's will the supreme law of our daily life we discover still more fully the meaning of his purpose. Thus an obedient life becomes "an organ of knowledge." It is like a musician learning to master his instrument; only as he practices constantly and gives himself up to the art that he is seeking to acquire will he become the skilled musician. The way to seek God's face is to yield our lives to the doing of his will with full devotion. Religion is learned by doing as are all other great endeavors of life.

9. What Is God Like?

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14:9).

For centuries men have defended the proposition that Jesus is like God. Now we are learning also that God is like Jesus. We come to the Father through the matchless human consciousness of Jesus. There we find out what God is like.

How can we see Jesus?—Not with our physical eyes, since he lives no longer on earth. But we may see him in the reports of his life and words as they are given to us in the New Testament. By the use of our imagination, picturing him vividly, we may

see and understand him. Also by observing the results of his influence upon men now we may come to sense his life and character. But most perfectly by yielding ourselves to his service we feel his presence and power upon us and understand him.

What we discover when we see Jesus.—Complete moral integrity. There is no sense or taint of fault in him. His most common acts bear successfully our closest inspection. Perfect service to the needs of the world in which he lived. There is not a single failure to give his best to every human need as he perceived it. Perfect love for all his fellows marked his human life. He realized completely all the most exacting requirements of the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule.

God is like what we discover in Jesus.—God is good. His moral integrity is the warrant for all human goodness. God desires the highest welfare of all his children. He gives us nothing less than himself in order that this may be realized; he takes a part in our development into the character that he desires for us. God is love. He loves us in spite of our sins; he loves us out of our sins; he loves us into a new life that must finally conquer all sin and weakness. God is nearer to us than the very beating of our hearts. God is the chief factor in our surroundings and the supreme item in our consciousness. God was all this to Jesus; he can and will be all this to us. Our highest name for God is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

10. Sundering Sin

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

Why do we fail to answer when God speaks? Why do we not quickly and completely respond to the Father whom we discover in Jesus? It is due to the fact of sin, which sunders us from God.

Sin is universal.—In its grossest forms we are aware of it and shrink from it. It finds expression in hate and robbery and

lust. But even those whom the world regards as saints are also most keenly conscious of their sins. The literature of the Christian people reveals this deep penitence for the sins that make Christ mourn. Sin clutches all human life in its fell grasp.

Sin is disobedience to God's will.—This is not a definition of sin but the description of one of its most apparent aspects. We ought to live habitually under the reign of God's will of perfect love. This demands our obedience. Its purpose is our highest welfare. To thwart that purpose is to miss the true aim of life. The New Testament word for sin means "to miss the mark," that is, to lose the highest achievements of life by disobedience.

Sin is selfishness.—Another fundamental aspect of sin. It consists in preferring our own interests to those that are higher, either the will of God or the welfare of our comrades. It refuses to accept social obligation. It acts either from pure selfishness or the "herd instinct" rather than from the motive of unselfish love which Jesus made the supreme law of the Kingdom of God. So it makes us cold and vain. It narrows the range of life and kills all altruism.

Sin is destruction.—Such a selfish and disobedient motive destroys all the finer responses and powers of the human spirit. It cripples our own loyalty to the motive of sacrifice, which has developed all the noblest traits of humanity. It injures others, whose well-being is in our keeping and whose welfare we ought constantly to seek. It sunders us from God, whose moral demand cannot be satisfied by a sinful life. If the disaster goes on unchecked life swings into growing chaos and ruin. Is there any way of escape?

11. Good News

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (II Cor. 5:19).

This is one of many interpretations of "the gospel." The meaning of this word has become so frayed and worn that its early meaning is almost gone. To its early users

it was a kindling and holy word. What does it mean?

God and man, sundered through sin, may be reconciled.—God's love is strong enough to find a way to the citadel of man's will and change its supreme decisions. Selfishness can be overcome, lawlessness can be conquered, and the course of life, which has been missing the mark, can be so changed that its true objective will be reached. Thus man may be brought back to God. This is good news.

This reconciliation is wrought through Christ.—God wanted to prove his love for man and his purpose to save him from sin. So God took on, or clothed himself in human form in order that his compelling love and saving purpose might be clear beyond doubt. Christ is the world's Savior. In him alone is the way to a new life. That way is easy to find. This is good news.

By trust and obedience we receive the reconciliation.—On our part we must trust the good news so fully that we yield ourselves to it. We must believe to the extent of personal loyalty. Obedience to the good news means that we make it a way of life. The gospel comes with a command. It calls for changes in conduct. Thus the ruin of sin is repaired. This is good news.

The reconciliation is for the whole world.—Not for a selected group of persons; not for a particular race or religious class; not for humanity alone, but for all the world. The scope of the gospel is the reach of all creation. This is good news.

12. Parable of the Soils

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Mark 4:9).

What kind of response will the good news receive? This depends on the kind of mind with which we attend to it. Jesus set forth this truth in the story of the four kinds of soil into which the good seed of the gospel fell.

The hardened mind.—Like the pathway, beaten down by daily work and the pressure

of heavy burdens. No response to deep appeals or high enthusiasms because the mind has been rendered inert through ceaseless pressure by the beating of routine labor. We must break up the hardened areas of life by cultivating imagination and vision.

The shallow mind.—Like the rocky soil with thin earth over the ledge, responds quickly to any stimulus. Easily moved by an emotional appeal. Cannot carry out its decisions in sustained action. No reliance to be placed upon it for permanence or endurance. Deceives through its lack of power to "carry on." We must train the will so that it will make *permanent* decisions. Strengthen our resolution and persistence by holding on stubbornly when we might easily let go.

The preoccupied mind.—Like the soil, full of the old roots. As soon as natural conditions cause the seed to sprout the old brambles appear and the young plants have no chance. We are congested with interests and activities in these busy days. We allow so many to take up our time and strength that the supreme matters are crowded out. We must discriminate more carefully and put first things first.

The fertile mind.—The larger part of the field is good soil. It responds to the seed with the resources which cause it to spring into life. The gospel tends to find root, to grow steadily, to yield fruit. We must increase the fertile areas. We must co-operate with God to make our life rich in Christian fruitage.

13. A New Mind

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Sin separates man from God. The Father's mighty love, revealed in Christ, brings him back. This involves a deep, inward change, *repentance*. What is it?

Negatively.—It is not simply sorrow for the fact that we are caught in the mesh of our sin and disgraced. Repentance some-

times goes no deeper than this. No lasting change results. It is cowardly.

It is not simply sorrow for the wrong act or motive that led to the act. This is deeper than sorrow for consequences. It tends to hold us from committing the same wrong act again. Not radical enough.

It is not simply a resolution not to cherish the evil motive or do the wrong act again. This is a necessary part of repentance; but it is not the root of it.

Positively.—Repentance involves a complete change of mind or ruling purpose of action. It reverses the scale of values according to which we have acted in the past. It is the resolute decision to regulate our conduct by a new set of principles. Repentance sets new objects before us and enthrones a new series of positive purposes at the center of our habitual activity. The word for repentance means *a new mind*, that is, a complete change in the fundamental convictions with which we do regular business in the control of daily life.

God's goodness leads us to repentance.—We are not frightened or forced into this new way of living. We are won to it by the compelling power of the love of the Father. God's goodness is the one final force that makes us good.

14. Obedience the Test of Love

Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say (Luke 6:46)?

It is easy to announce one's loyalty by one's words. The final act of allegiance consists in obedience with the changes in conduct and character that issue from it.

Obedience is the universal test of life.—In mastering the world we must obey its laws, as a child learns to walk by conforming to the laws that govern the physical world. In study we must obey the principles learned and the propositions proved in order to make progress. In industry, as we learn a trade we use the skill acquired as the means of further advance. In personal friendship we always have to submit ourselves to the

needs and desires of others in order to make the friendship strong and lasting. In moral relations it is not enough to know what *is* right; we must *submit* to the right and do it. So in the Christian life obedience is the test of love and the condition of growth.

Christ commands us.—Jesus is an Example; but he is also Lord and Master. Christ brings new laws to govern the daily life of men. These principles make a practical demand upon us and effect a difference in our behavior. It is serious business to follow Christ because we must yield ourselves so completely to the principles which he proposes. We must give ourselves up to him in the joy and devotion of a personal surrender.

Obedience is the supreme item in our confession of Christ.—Words are easily spoken. It is not difficult to unite with others in an institution or to carry out a program of religious activities. The test of all our theories and creeds is the kind of life that issues from them. They are the inspiring sources of action; but the action itself is the proof of the quality and power of the principle. The community rightfully demands that we shall not only reflect but repeat the spirit and the conduct of Jesus. We cannot do this unless we yield ourselves completely to him. What did he say about the cultivation of our personal character; our daily dealings with men; our practice of justice; our willingness to follow him to the limit? Are we obeying our Master's commands in these and other respects?

15. Faith That Saves

By grace have ye been saved through faith (Eph. 2:8).

When we speak of "salvation by faith" we mean only that faith is the means by which the result is realized. The source is the gracious love of God. We are put into relations with this source, however, by the act of faith.

Faith involves an idea about Christ.—In analyzing the complex act of faith we

cannot always affirm which factor comes first; but all are present in the complete transaction. There is an approval of the claims of Christ by our minds. He has created a favorable impression upon us. A decision to follow him seems logically valid.

Faith involves a feeling toward Christ.—Our emotions follow our minds. There is a warmth and glow of feeling. Christ seems to be lovely. He is desirable, like any object that has evoked our love. This draws us toward him. We are happy in the approach.

Faith involves a decision for Christ.—The will approves by a positive decision what the mind has accepted and the feelings have desired. This decision embraces the whole personality and commits one to a personal relationship. It is often called "the faith of a transaction." It is trust. It calls for loyalty. It is like the highest human friendship of which we are capable.

Faith grows through experience.—Faith is like all vital experiences; it develops and is perfected through its exercise. The faith of maturity is not the faith of childhood. Courage and confidence come from the exercise of faith. It is necessary to trust more fully in order to have the power of trusting increased.

16. True to the Colors

Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32).

Open loyalty is a practical test of love. Our "confession of faith" is the affirmation of our loyalty to Christ and his Kingdom. He asked his disciples to be true to their standards.

Why should we confess Christ?—In order to define our position before our comrades. The world has the right to know where we stand in reference to the supreme problems. A "trimmer" never is respected. We must prove our loyalty to Christ by expressing our allegiance to him and recording ourselves as champions of his Cause. Our confession sets a standard toward which we

strive and therefore gives us precise aims and positive purposes.

How shall we confess Christ?—By our loyal words. Men estimate our loyalties first by what we say. Therefore it is the right thing to speak out boldly our inmost loyalty to Christ. We prove the reality of our words by our conduct. Therefore our actions are confessions of faith. When we do what Jesus commands out of loyalty to him we are true to the colors. Then we confirm our loyalty by the personal and specific service that we render to Christ, especially in introducing others to him as Master. The first disciples were made in this way. We could not try to bring others into an allegiance in which we ourselves had no confidence. The greatest need of the churches now is a more constant and loyal testimony to Christ on the part of his disciples.

What are the results of confessing Christ?—It defines and strengthens our own faith and practice. When we openly take a stand for any truth we are clarified in our thinking and sustained in our practical duties. The best way to appreciate any idea is to make some positive statement and perform some service in its behalf. Open confession is the surest proof of the claims of Christ upon others and the greatest human influence to lead them to him. Other disciples are always made as a result of brave and loving testimony. Open confession gives the highest honor to Christ as Savior and Lord. When we stand squarely for him and act boldly in his behalf we show him the highest honor. Loyalty is the key to the Christian life.

17. The Christian Ideal of Life

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God (Phil. 1:9-11).

This was Paul's ideal for his friends in Philippi; but it is still an adequate ideal for the friends of Christ.

Abounding love.—This is the first essential for the Christian life, as it has been from the beginning. Christ was the resistless and undiscouraged Lover of men. His disciples must follow him in this respect. We must love abundantly; love all kinds of persons; love at the cost of service and sacrifice. This is the spirit and habit of the followers of Christ.

Knowledge and discernment.—Christian love is not ignorant or reckless. It calls for knowledge and discernment or insight. Each is necessary to the other. The surest way to know is to love; the best way to love is to use insight and wisdom. Love is saved from sentimentality by wisdom; wisdom is saved from coldness by love. Wisdom is the substance of our acquired knowledge; discernment is the accurate vision into the true character of life that is given us by love.

Approving the excellent.—Ordinarily we waste a vast amount of time and energy on things that are not worth while and let more important aims go by default. The Christian ideal approves those purposes which are excellent and so makes our labor rewarding. The way in which to decide what is worth while is to see how Jesus lived. That which he sought is worth our seeking.

Righteous.—Three aspects of Christian righteousness are defined: Negatively, it consists in being void of any valid charge of evil. This is good so far as it goes; but it is merely negative. Therefore, we seek the positive life, which is full of the fruits of right living. Finally, this righteousness is not something that we gain by struggle; it issues from our allegiance to Christ.

Bringing glory and praise to God.—The Christian life does not seek its own honor and praise alone; it seeks to yield honor to God. If this is achieved our reward is sufficient.

18. Growing a Soul

But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18).

The Christian life, like all life, is subject to the law of growth. We *are* Christians; but also we are *becoming* Christians. This text shows us not only the *end* but the *sphere* of Christian development, the grace and the knowledge of Christ.

Grow into a deeper knowledge of Christ.—Read, study, and think about him. Imagine Jesus as he lived with his friends in Galilee. Reflect on his actions. Ponder his teachings. Make these real and concrete. Compare them with the words and deeds of Christians now.

Try to make yours the knowledge that Jesus possessed.—He knew more fully than any other man who ever has lived the truth about God, about man, and about their right and normal relationships to one another. We can master this necessary knowledge only as we obey the principles contained in it.

Grow into the Master's precious life.—Jesus was the most unselfish, loving, and gracious Comrade who ever lived. "Manners make men." We must behave as he did in our contacts with our fellows. If the world could rise to the level of the chivalrous life of Jesus the day of the Kingdom of God would break.

Grow into the grace of Christ's personal sacrifice.—The grace of Christ does not appear alone in his courteous life; it is the very substance of his spirit and motive. Christ gave himself without reservation to all mankind. He showed unmerited favor to all mankind. This involved sacrifice. The grace of Christ appears in the cross. Until we rise to the height of personal sacrifice for the Master we have not attained the grace of the Master.

19. The Purpose of Christian Character

And for their sakes I sanctify myself (John 17:19).

There has been wide discussion as to whether the gospel is designed for the individual or for society. In this verse Jesus reveals his own attitude toward his life and answers the question as to the individual and social values of the Kingdom of God. Both are involved; there is no essential conflict between them.

The duty of self-development.—The word translated "sanctify" means to *perfect* or to *make whole*. Jesus thinks of himself as the son of God whose sacred obligation is to make himself complete in every possible way. In one sense of the word this is a doctrine of unrelieved selfishness or of the selfhood. It contemplates one's self as worth every possible effort in the way of self-culture or development. It insists upon the supreme worth of the whole personality, body, mind, and spirit. These are to receive constant attention and culture in order that the individual may become perfect or complete. The most powerful instrument that God can use to make the world what he designs it to be is perfected and consecrated human personality. Such development of completeness of personality is impossible, however, without the discipline and culture of service to others.

The duty of service to others.—A perfected personality that is not employed for an unselfish purpose may be a curse instead of a blessing. So Jesus perfected his own life in order that he might give it lavishly for the good of others. All gains in individual character are for the purpose of using them in a wider ministry to others. It is the intention of the gift that warrants the struggle to possess it. So we do not ask merely what a gain in Christian character *is*; we ask what it is *for*. If it is for the welfare of our comrades and for the highest good of the community we are warranted in seeking it with all our strength. This constant and beneficent reaction goes on all the time in the building of Christian character: Do we

want to serve our age? Then we must perfect ourselves. Do we want to perfect ourselves? Then we must serve our age for we can reach perfection in no other way.

20. The Chorus of Christian Character

Yea, and for this cause adding all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love (II Pet. 1:57).

The verb translated "supply" means to "furnish and train a chorus." It involves all possible skill and diligence and patience. It is like gathering, rehearsing, and conducting an orchestra. These eight graces of Christian character—an octave—are to be furnished by the disciples of Christ.

Faith.—We begin here logically. By our voluntary trust we come into a league of love and loyalty with Christ. Faith is not a single, finished act; it is a constant attitude and activity of the spirit.

Virtue.—This refers to the tested strength and proved powers of the soldier. It is gained in the process of struggle. It can be relied upon because we have won it under stress.

Knowledge.—This is the practical fruit of experience. We do not gain it from books or theories; we attain it in the great school of experience. Christians are always learners.

Self-control.—This is another word for *temperance*. We must know ourselves and master ourselves. This is the first step in knowing and mastering the world around us.

Patience.—This extends self-control to the whole of life and makes us long-suffering. It takes time to lift a continent. God is patient in making the world; we must be patient in making our character like that of Christ.

Godliness.—This is the true name for goodness. The highest manhood is divine. We propose the noblest ideal to ourselves

when we seek to become like God. This is the highest reverence.

Brotherly kindness.—Everyone is fighting a hard battle. The souls of men need kindness. True brotherhood defines the sort of kindness that we are to show to others. This issues from our knowledge and experience of God's Fatherhood.

Love.—This is the inclusive and crowning virtue of the Christian life and character. God is love; this is the reason why we are to love others. No other point of view will reveal our duties to others as love will show them.

These eight qualities of Christian character we must assemble and train and use in complete harmony. They will render God's music.

21. The House of Man's Soul

Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body (I Cor. 6:19, 20; see also 3:16).

The gospel is good news to the whole of life and therefore it has a message to the body. It does not despise the physical; it exalts it as the organ of the spirit and the temple of the divine. How shall we treat our bodies as the temple of God?

The honor we pay the temple.—A sanctuary is the place which we honor both for its own sake and for that which resides there. The body is the spirit's sanctuary. Every organ and function is to be highly regarded on this account. The highest respect that we can pay the spirit is to provide for it the cleanest and most beautiful temple possible.

The care we take of the temple.—We must give ceaseless care to the building of the temple that it may be strong enough to serve the needs of a strong and deathless spirit. The soul is here to do great deeds; it must have an instrument fitted to this end. We must take great care to keep the temple clean. Nothing coarse or vulgar has the

right to be there. No foul thought or base motive may be allowed to take its place in this physical temple. It must be made beautiful with every possible adornment of loveliness. The spirit is exquisitely beautiful; its house must be of the same kind.

The services rendered through the temple.—We speak of the “services” in a church or temple. This indicates the real business of the body; it is to serve the needs of the spirit as it in turn serves the needs of the community. The whole business of the body is summed up in this idea of service. When the body is being used by the spirit rather than existing for itself it is discharging its highest function. Therefore we think first of the resident spirit. What use is it getting out of the body? Is our physical equipment of such a kind that the spirit can express itself without hindrance through it? If not, how can we change the relation so that we shall make our bodies the residence and the agent of the spirit?

22. Temptation—and God

There has no temptation taken you but such as men can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it (I Cor. 10:13).

The function of tests in the realization of the gospel life.—Tests are imperative in building and manufacture. All materials are proved before they are built into enduring structures. In mathematics and logic we demand that propositions shall be subjected to proof. In the development of life according to the norm and laws of the gospel we make the same demand. Tests ought to be welcomed and their results used. Temptations are tests; they prove the worth and durability of Christian character.

The endurance of tests.—Tests involve strain and suffering. They call for the utmost resolution, patience, and courage. They are not welcome at the moment. How are they to be met? Not by seeking to avoid

them. No problem is ever solved by running away from it. Face the temptation squarely. All difficulties generally look largest at a distance, as a hill appears steepest before we actually begin to climb it. A determined stand is the only Christian way in which to submit to a test.

God's part in our tests.—At the moment when we seem nearest the point of breaking God comes in with help. Millions of witnesses confirm this statement. They have fought until it seemed as if they must surrender, and then, at the moment when defeat seemed inevitable, something has broken the power of the temptation. Energy from God has rushed in, reinforced their feeble powers, given them the help they needed. We can rely upon God. He will not fail the soul. Strength will come to match the trial.

23. Prevailing Prayer

The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working (Jas. 5:16).

Prayer is communion between the soul and God. It has as many forms of expression as a human friendship has. Sometimes it is silent, consisting entirely in the joy of “togetherness.” Sometimes it is audible, consisting of praise and adoration and petition. It always is a vital and beautiful part of the Christian life, the “vital breath” and “native air” of Christian experience.

The righteous man's prayer.—While men pray because they are good, they also are good because they pray. The promise of achievement in the life of prayer is not indiscriminate and unconditioned. It is realized fully by those whose life merits the blessings that flow from communion with the Father. Just as a child's fellowship with his earthly parents is made profitable in the end by the character of his relations with them, so the life of prayer depends for its rewards and satisfactions upon the rightness of our life.

The gradual results.—Note the phrase, “in its working.” The results may be delayed. They may not come as swiftly

as we could wish. God takes time to bring about the results which we desire. It is necessary to enter into partnership with him and to share the long processes by which his great ends are gained. This tests and trains our patience and endurance. It is desirable. If everything were accomplished in a moment we would not receive the discipline that is necessary for our highest welfare.

Prayer an engine of achievement.—It finally "availeth much." Prayer does actually get results. We may not be able to explain this; but in some way through communion with God union is effected with the higher powers outside ourselves and energy comes in to give the resources we need in the endeavor to lead the Christian life. It is like the result that is derived from a talk with someone stronger than ourselves when help is actually given to match our need. We do not wait perfectly to understand all the reasons that warrant the action. We simply take the help that is offered and thank God for it.

24. Who Is My Neighbor?

Exposition of Parable of Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).

The cynical question that called out the story. The telling force of the answer; not a discussion but a story, the meaning of which admitted of no debate and enforced the truth with wholesome directness.

The wounded man.—In the unsettled condition of the country the event would be readily understood. This hurt, plundered man stands for every kind of human need that is constantly pressing upon us. Sin has robbed men of their treasures and left them hurt and bleeding along all the highways of the world. They need help; they need neighbors.

The priest.—His business was the representation and administration of religion. Mercy and helpfulness were his function. The care of bleeding men should have been the very technique of his daily life. He saw

the wounded man but apparently did not even break his walk. He passed along on the opposite side of the road.

The Levite.—He also was trained in the exercise of religion. The ceremonies were the object of his study and devotion. He would not have conducted one inaccurately; a stickler for form. He saw the wounded man plainly. But he did not stop to help him.

The Samaritan.—Remember that Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies. Their ancestors had quarreled; that was enough to keep the quarrel hot for centuries. This Samaritan had every racial prejudice against the Jews. He might have said, "Good enough for him! There is one less Jew to abuse me and my people." But this Samaritan was a true neighbor. He did not inquire for names and relationships. He broke his journey; got the wounded man on his horse; took him to his own room; watched the man personally; took the responsibility of providing him a room and board. He stands for the true neighbor who will never give up a permanent relationship of love and service to any needy soul anywhere at any time.

25. The Living Church

The church which is his body (Eph. 1:22, 23).

This is a description of the church according to an analogy which we all appreciate and understand. The church at this moment the organism, or group of living persons, in whose daily life the purpose of Jesus works so radically that it gets its will done through them. We note:

The unity of the church.—Just as any living plant or animal is a diversity of organs unified and controlled for a common purpose, so the living church is composed of a great number of persons and programs, united and directed by the unseen Christ, resident within them. The ground of unity in the living church is the will of Christ. It is working to accomplish its purpose now as

it did when Jesus lived in Palestine; only it now uses a vast number of living persons as it then used his physical body and his comrades in daily life.

The diversity of the church.—The highest organisms are those which have the greatest diversity of organs blended into a common purpose, e.g., the wider the range of variety the greater the usefulness, provided they are fused in a common purpose.

The church and its environment.—The organism derives its sustenance from its environment, which it serves in return. The organism exists for the environment. The church has the right to expect support from the community; the community has the right to demand service from the church.

Organ and organism.—This alone insures a living church. Life must animate the organism; Christ must animate the church. Only thus can it function in its environment and reproduce its own life.

26. Citizens and Athletes of the Gospel

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).

The meaning of the text is clarified by two figures: the word translated *let your manner of life be* means literally *act as a citizen*; the word translated *striving for* means literally *being an athlete*. To be a Christian means to be a citizen and an athlete for Christ.

Citizens of the gospel.—Consider the *rights or privileges* of gospel citizenship. Membership in the commonwealth of Christ involves the right to know God; the Father is discovered and appropriated through Christ. It involves the privilege of knowing what right is and how to do it; we derive our moral insight and energy from Christ. It involves the right to immortal life; the commonwealth of Christ embraces earth and heaven. Consider the *duties* of gospel

citizenship. These are more important than rights. There is the duty to perfect our personality; to serve our generation in the spirit of Christ; to know and do God's will. Consider the mutual loyalties of gospel citizenship. No man lives to himself. We must sympathize with each other; help each other; sacrifice for each other.

Athletes of the gospel.—Loyalty to Christ is not negative or puny; it is martial and athletic business. It calls for red blood, for daring, for training, for resolution, and for persistence. Consider the athlete's *purpose*: he means to win. He means to win honorably. He loses in fine spirit as a good sportsman. Consider the athlete's discipline. No denial is too great to put him in fit condition. He plays the game with the team, merging individual desire in the victory for the group. Consider the athlete's determination. He does not give up even when he is apparently beaten. These characteristics are called for by the gospel.

27. The Gospel of the Kingdom

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23).

The message of Jesus was expressed in the analogy of a kingdom. It was the only analogy that could have been understood. It was a heavenly order of earthly life; it represented the reign of God in the whole life of man.

The reality of the Kingdom.—This is more than a clear and forceful figure of rhetoric. The Kingdom has reality. We cannot see its regal head, its court, its palaces, its splendor; but there are actual facts in the spiritual Kingdom that correspond to these temporal things. There is vast energy in the Kingdom; its laws are valid; its rights and duties claim our power and loyalty as much as those of the civil state. Jesus established a real order of life.

Our neglect of the Kingdom.—Strangely, this truth was central in all the teaching and action of Jesus; but it has been given

scant place in the thought and life of the Christian church. Other doctrines and duties have usurped its primary place and claim. Jesus exalted the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven as an order of life meant for the world; we have thought of it chiefly as describing the life after death or a far-off consummation of development.

The reaffirming of the Kingdom.—This is the day in which to affirm and realize the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The Great War has revealed depths of sin and hate never before expressed by men; it has uncovered yearnings for unity and loving service never defined before. The conception of the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus made plain in his words and life shows us the only workable program that can meet these aspirations of the human spirit in the modern age. Therefore the pulpit must publish the good news of the Kingdom and it must be made the program for the world.

28. Entering the Kingdom

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21; 18:3).

We come voluntarily into the Kingdom of Heaven rather than becoming its members by the accident of birth or environment.

Humility and trust.—These are represented by the attitude and action of the child, who came to Jesus happily and confidently when he was asked to do so. Jesus does not make *childishness* the condition of entering the Kingdom, but the childlike spirit of humility and trustfulness. The Kingdom is the realm of service; therefore humble hearts alone can share it. The Kingdom is the realm of loving deeds; therefore mutual confidence alone can meet its obligations. The child did not stop to argue or protest when Jesus placed him among the disciples; he put himself into the

care of Jesus immediately and happily. Thus we enter the Kingdom.

Obedience to God's will.—The laws of the Kingdom of Heaven are determined by the will of God, which is dictated by personal love. When love decides the program of life it must be good. To yield our lives to the program which infinite love and wisdom have determined is to be sure of all the best satisfactions which can possibly come to us. Obedience is an unwelcome proposal to all proud and self-conscious men. They do not like to submit their wills to a higher will or to subject their life to a program that they did not shape. Like the lowly entrance to a lofty room, however, obedience is the way by which we enter upon the Christian life. The act of surrender is one of yielding; but the gain is eternal in its rewards and satisfactions.

29. Laws of the Kingdom

Every kingdom is an "order" of life, a practical way of living. Therefore it must have its laws, in obedience to which freedom is found. The harmonious relationships of life are imperative to welfare and progress.

The law of love.—See Matt. 22:35-40. Summed up briefly, this says: Love God with all your being. There must be nothing partial in the loyal affection that we render our God. He must be given an intelligent love. We are not to love blindly or with bigoted tenacity. Christ wins the approval of our minds as well as of our hearts. Our wills must go into it as well as our emotions; the whole personality must answer God's claim. Then we must love our neighbor as we love ourselves; we must love our neighbor in order to increase our love for our own best selves; we must love and perfect our best selves in order to love and serve our neighbor.

The Golden Rule.—See Matt. 7:12. Summed up briefly this means that we must perform for others all those acts which, done to us by others, would promote our highest welfare. We want just treatment; then we

must treat others justly. We want to be forgiven; then we must forgive others. We want to be dealt with patiently; then we must deal patiently with others. Setting the standard by which others are to determine their conduct toward us, we set the standard by which our conduct toward others is to be determined.

The Sermon on the Mount.—See Matt. 5:7. Summed up briefly this offers a simple program for daily conduct which would issue in such a just, kind world as humanity never yet has known. Here the great motives of life that lead to noble action are set forth simply. It begins with the promise of earthly happiness and closes with the promise of eternal satisfaction. It is the greatest program of human joy and well-being that ever has been offered to mankind. Jesus proved by his own life that its principles could be successfully carried out. It is worth our highest endeavors to attain it; it is God's way for us to follow.

30. The Privileges of the Kingdom

For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

Membership in the Kingdom of Heaven brings many duties; but also great privileges and rights that are highly desirable.

Righteousness.—The result of allegiance to Christ and loyalty to the Kingdom is a changed life. Goodness, honor, integrity, take the place of the old, mean, and selfish motives which formally controlled our actions. A good life is not gained by the mechanical addition of virtues one by one; it issues from the habitual practice of the ruling principles of Jesus which we accept in faith and obedience. A good life is therefore the effect of union with Christ in the master-motives of life.

Peace.—The only way in which the world will ever unite in the covenants and institutions that will end war and conflict of all kinds will be to make the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven the laws of individual

and social life. There is no permanent "balance of power" that can insure the world's peace. Love and self-sacrifice and justice, recognized and obeyed as the fundamental laws of life, will bring the day of peace.

Joy.—The race demands happiness with eager hearts. We have the right to be happy. But our joy often rests in shallow and passing experiences. The joys of the Kingdom are deep and permanent. Our profoundest happiness is secured when we are investing our lives in the general program in which Jesus found his joy and satisfaction. We know his happiness, which nothing could prevent; it rested in his loving service to others, which nothing could discourage or stop. We are to do as Jesus did in order to be happy as Jesus was happy.

31. Loyalty to the King

Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am (John 13:13).

Jesus did not hesitate to affirm his place of supreme authority in the Kingdom of God. He placed his own Person at the center as the object of loyalty on the part of all Christians. The test still is that of loyalty to Christ.

Loyalty to the King's truth.—Jesus brought the truth by which men may live well and presented it plainly so that all may understand it. But understanding is not enough. We must take the truth that Jesus taught and exemplified and make it into workable principles to guide us in daily living. It has a sacred claim upon us; it is not a merely abstract truth. Test life by what we are doing with the King's truth.

Loyalty to the King's spirit.—More important and imperial than all that Jesus taught was the spirit in which he lived and served his age. There is perfect union between his words and his spirit; but it is the spirit that is supreme. This spirit also comes to us with a personal claim. It demands that we shall bring our own lives under the sway of the same high mood and

sacrificial temper. When we do this we are sure that our life will be useful and happy. We may miss the attainments that the world calls fortunate; but we shall have the inner peace and joy that the world cannot give or take away. Test life by what we are doing with the King's spirit.

Loyalty to the King's Person.—Either Jesus was the rightful Commander of men's lives or he was the most audacious of proud leaders; for he dared to make loyalty to his Person the test of life in the Kingdom of God. He said, Follow *me*. He put himself at the center of the love and the service that men should seek to render to God and to one another. It is still so. Christians are those who have yielded their wills to Christ and are utterly loyal to him as well as to his truth and spirit. They think of themselves as still the followers and disciples of a person. Jesus does not walk at their sides but he reigns in their hearts. He is not with them at the table or in the street; but he is actually with them in their inmost purposes and endeavors. When they are sure of this and loyal to all that the truth involves they are strong and happy. Test life by loyalty to Christ himself.

32. Sons of the Resurrection

Sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:36).

Christians have been well called the Children of the Resurrection. The Christian life is accurately described as the practice of the life eternal. The peril attending our belief in immortality is that it will be immortal in our theories but dead in our lives. The urgent obligation upon all Christians is to live day by day as if each were a part of the eternal life, imparting immortal meaning to mortal life. Four principles are valid:

All acts have eternal value.—No deed is something simply done and ended. It goes on forever in its influence. It must reach its conclusion sometime and bear its inevitable fruit. We cannot say goodbye to our deeds; we shall meet them again. Therefore the fact of immortality adds the greatest meaning and worth to all our deeds and duties.

All souls have eternal worth.—If the soul is endowed with immortal value how can we injure it whether it be our own or that of a comrade. It is more durable and precious than anything else we know. True respect for ourselves and for others is derived from this fact of the deathless value of the human spirit. Kindness and social obligation find their highest warrant in this truth. God's image in man and the fact of immortality make our earthly life significant and beautiful.

God's highest purposes for man's welfare involve eternity.—We know how short the span of human life on earth is. But the resources of eternity are in God's hands. We may see only the broken arc here; but there is still possible the "perfect round" in the eternal world. We might easily despair if the span of mortal life and the small resources of earth were available for the perfection of God's purposes. But when we reckon with eternity we take courage and join more eagerly in partnership with God to realize our supreme good.

New power for daily life issues from this truth.—The treasures of hope and fresh resolution open from this truth. Immortality does not remain a doctrine about which to speculate but a truth by which to live. It brings confidence and joy into even the hardest situations for heaven and earth are one and eternity will see time's task completed.